



Frequently Asked Questions

Aurora Corridor Project

Last updated January 2014

What is the Aurora Corridor Project?

The Aurora Corridor Project is the City of Shoreline's redevelopment of the three miles of Aurora Avenue N (State Route 99) that run through Shoreline. The project begins at N 145th Street and ends at N 205th Street. This project will improve safety, traffic flow and capacity, transit operations, drainage systems, economic development opportunities and the aesthetic appeal of Aurora. To date, the City has successfully reconstructed 48 of the 60 blocks in Shoreline.

Listed below are answers to frequently asked questions about the project.

Why is the Aurora Corridor Project necessary?

According to the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Shoreline's three-mile section of Aurora is one of the most dangerous stretches of road in the entire state, for both pedestrians and vehicles. Based on WSDOT data, collisions on the first mile, between N 145th and N 165th Streets, were reduced by more than 53% after improvements were completed in 2007. With the completion of the subsequent improvements from N 145th to N 192nd Streets, accidents on the entire corridor have been reduced by 45%. Pedestrian safety is being improved through the construction of new sidewalks and delineated driveways, making it easier for pedestrians to know where they should walk and where vehicles will enter and exit businesses on Aurora. The project also includes changes that will support transit, as Aurora is a major transit route with over 7,000 riders per day in Shoreline and is one of six regional Bus Rapid Transit Corridors as of 2014.

The third mile: N 185th to N 192nd Streets (Mile 3A) & N 192nd to 205th Streets (Mile 3B)

What is the "third mile?" Why did the City start construction between N 185th to N 192nd Streets, but not north of N 192nd Street?

The third mile of the Aurora Corridor Project runs from N 185th to N 205th Streets. To be competitive in seeking outside funding to complete this last phase, the third mile was broken into two separate segments: N 185th to N 192nd Streets (Mile 3A) and N 192nd to N 205th Streets (Mile 3B). The funding had to be spent within a certain time period or it would no longer be available.

Construction on Aurora between N 185th and N 192nd Streets, and on side streets including N 192nd Street, began in January 2011 and was completed in the summer of 2012 by Johansen Excavating, Inc. The design for the second segment of the third mile, between N 192nd to N 205th Streets, is complete and construction is scheduled to begin in late January 2014.

What improvements will be made to the project area?

Questions or concerns? Contact us.

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Project improvements include:

- Landscaped medians with U-turn pockets
- Sidewalks separated from the roadway by landscaping and other amenities
- Synchronized traffic signals
- Business Access and Transit (BAT) lanes
- Natural stormwater treatments
- Retaining walls of various types and sizes
- Street lighting
- Underground utilities

Does the project include traffic changes or modifications on side streets through the project area?

Yes. Some side streets will be improved as part of the project, including:

- Rebuilding N 200th Street east of Aurora to the Costco entrance with concrete to improve roadway durability.
- Reconfiguring Firlands Way N for safety.
- Reversing the direction of Echo Lake Place to improve traffic flow.

What is the schedule for construction for the N 192nd and N 205th Street segment?

Construction on Aurora between N 192nd to N 205th Streets will begin in late January 2014 and is expected to be complete in by the end of 2015, weather permitting.

Construction is expected to begin on the west side of Aurora and crews will complete sidewalks, driveways and some utility work. Following work on the west side, traffic will be moved to the west and construction on the east side of Aurora will begin. Finally, crews will construct medians and left- and U-turn pockets in the middle of the roadway. The contractor will typically maintain two lanes of traffic in each direction on Aurora during the day but may close a single lane if necessary. The contractor is required to keep four lanes of traffic open during peak-commute hours.

How much does construction cost for the N 192nd and N 205th Street segment?

Construction of this segment is estimated to cost approximately \$32 million. The City of Shoreline selected Gary Merlino Construction Company as the contractor for this segment of the Aurora Corridor Project.

Who is the project team for the N 192nd and N 205th Streets segment?

As with the second mile and the first segment of the third mile, HDR Engineering is leading design work; KBA Construction Management is managing the contractor and construction work in the field; and EnviroIssues is supporting communications during construction. Gary Merlino Construction Company (GMCC) is the general contractor and will utilize sub-contractors for various pieces of work.

Why are retaining walls necessary?

Due to the topography and grade changes within this segment, retaining walls are necessary on both the east and west sides of Aurora. There will be more retaining walls constructed in this segment (23 walls total) than any other segment of the project. To help improve the appearance of the structures, the larger walls will feature grooves.

Why are stormwater management improvements necessary?

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The City of Shoreline is committed to environmental sustainability, and as such, underground stormwater treatment and storage systems are necessary along Aurora Avenue to control run-off and to protect nearby Echo Lake and Lake Ballinger. Vegetation along the corridor will include water-loving plants to mimic forests; collecting, absorbing and filtering stormwater runoff naturally.

What type of stormwater technologies will be used?

Several technologies will be utilized to manage stormwater and reduce run-off into nearby lakes, rivers and streams. One of the technologies planned for the corridor are Silva cells. These 'cells' are rigid plastic frames that are constructed beneath hard surfaces such as sidewalks. Silva cells retain run-off and allow stormwater to drain into the ground rather than draining into the stormwater system.

The City of Shoreline will also use permeable pavers in the sidewalks to collect stormwater and minimize run-off into surrounding bodies of water. The Filterra stormwater management system will also be utilized to both filter and treat run-off. Some of the stormwater will drain into the Rain Garden Plaza constructed in the previous phase at the southwest corner of Aurora and N 192nd Street.

Previous segments: N 145th to N 165th Streets (Mile 1) & N 165th to N 185th Streets (Miles 2)

What is the "first mile?"

The first mile of the Aurora Corridor Project runs between N 145th Street and N 165th Streets. The contractor, Gary Merlino Construction Company, completed the roadway improvements, including the two Interurban Trail pedestrian bridges in 2007.

What is the "second mile?"

The second mile of the Aurora Corridor Project runs between N 165th and N 185th Streets. The contractor, Marshbank Construction, Inc., substantially completed construction of this one-mile segment in 2011, and wrapped up a few minor tasks in 2012.

Construction

What are the hours of construction?

For Mile 3B, the contractor is permitted to work Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. However, to ensure the safety and efficiency of our crews and the traveling public, some night and weekend work will occur.

Before the contractor is allowed to work Saturdays, Sundays, holidays, and/or between the hours of 6 p.m. and 7 a.m. the contractor must request approval from the City and demonstrate that operating within their standard work hours is not possible due to safety or efficiency reasons. The City will make every attempt to inform affected properties of work planned outside standard construction hours.

In general, what should I expect during construction?

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The City has a noise ordinance in effect Monday to Friday from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m., and Saturdays and Sundays from 10 p.m. – 9 a.m. The contractor may request a variance to the ordinance from Sunday through Thursday nights.

Crews will work to minimize noise and other disruptions during work hours. However, neighbors can expect:

- Noise, dust, light and vibration during construction activities.
- Intermittent lane closures on Aurora Avenue.
- Temporary bus stop closures and/or relocations.
- Short-term driveway closures and sidewalk detours.
- Intermittent night and weekend work.
- A full closure of N 200th Street, a heavy transit corridor, for up to two weeks to rebuild the roadway with new, more durable concrete.

Read below for additional information about what to expect during construction.

I have a business on Aurora Avenue and I participated in the pre-construction survey. What is the City doing with the information I provided?

The City collected information from businesses and residents prior to the start of construction to learn about specific needs and concerns during construction, answer general questions about the project and collect information to help with construction planning. The information collected was provided to the contractor and construction management team to use as a reference when planning construction activities. Contact information will also be used to communicate with businesses and residents as necessary during construction and to provide them updated construction information and alerts.

How can I stay informed about construction activities?

The City has created a dedicated construction web page (www.shorelinewa.gov/aurora) and will post updates weekly and as needed during construction. Weekly email updates will be sent to the project contact list, and email alerts will be used when necessary. You can also call the 24-hour hotline at (206) 801-2485, or email us at aurora@shorelinewa.gov if you have questions or concerns.

To receive weekly email updates about the project, visit the City's homepage at www.shorelinewa.gov to sign up for *Alert Shoreline*, the City's new mass communication system.

Who do I call if I experience problems or have questions during construction?

Please call the 24-hour hotline at (206) 801-2485 or email your question or concerns to aurora@shorelinewa.gov. You can also find updated construction information on the City's website at www.shorelinewa.gov/aurora.

Can I influence the construction schedule or phasing?

It is up to the contractor to make decisions about schedule and phasing to ensure construction is completed as quickly and efficiently as possible. Therefore, individual property owners will not be able to influence project scheduling and sequencing. However, if you are anticipating special events or have a particular need, please let us know by calling the construction hotline at (206) 801-2485 or emailing us at aurora@shorelinewa.gov.

What will the City do to ensure public safety during construction?

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The City of Shoreline will require Gary Merlino Construction Company to use standard traffic control measures. These include a traffic control supervisor, cones, signs, detours, flaggers, and uniformed police officers, as appropriate, to maintain pedestrian, vehicle and emergency access to businesses and residences located along the corridor. The traffic control supervisor acts as the onsite traffic safety coordinator. The City is also working closely with emergency response agencies, including the Shoreline Police and Fire departments, as well as affected utilities, such as Seattle City Light, Seattle Public Utilities, and Puget Sound Energy, to keep the corridor safe during construction.

How can I stay safe during construction?

To help ensure everyone's safety, please:

- Follow the directions of signs and flaggers.
- Walk in designated pedestrian corridors.
- Avoid entering designated work zones.
- Obey posted speed limits.
- Do not approach the contractor in the work zone.
- Call the hotline to report unsafe situations: (206) 801-2485.

Will there be increased traffic and delays on Aurora Avenue? How many lanes of Aurora Avenue will be open?

While increased traffic and delays are unavoidable during construction, the City requires the contractor to maintain two through-lanes for traffic in each direction during peak-commute hours.

How will my driveway be affected?

New curbs, sidewalks and driveways will be installed along the entire corridor. During design, the City met with affected property owners to finalize right-of-way, temporary construction easements and property acquisitions. The City and property owners discussed if a driveway was planned to be adjusted, relocated or eliminated. Please consult the materials provided to you or your landlord during those conversations, or see the [project design roll plot](#) (available on the project website) for more information about driveway locations on Aurora Avenue. To request a copy of your property-specific map, call the construction hotline at (206) 801-2485 or email us at aurora@shorelinewa.gov.

I own a business, but have not seen the diagram the City provided to property owners showing changes to the property. How can I get a copy?

The City provided property-specific diagrams showing right-of-way, roadway, landscaping and access designs to property owners along the corridor. Please contact your property owner for a copy and the details of the changes to the property. If you have a business along the corridor and are unable to obtain a copy from your property owner, you may request a copy by calling the construction hotline at (206) 801-2485 or emailing us at aurora@shorelinewa.gov.

Will customers be able to access my business? Will my driveway be marked?

The City understands the impacts of this work on the affected community and great care will be taken to maintain driveway access. One of the lessons learned during the first mile was that driveways on Aurora Avenue should be more clearly delineated. The contractor will use blue "Business Access" signs and orange traffic control devices for increased visibility.

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When obstruction or temporary closure is unavoidable, such as during asphalt paving, City staff and the contractor will coordinate with businesses in advance. Also, turning left into driveways will not be permitted during construction, as it would require drivers to cross through the active work zone. As such, businesses should encourage customers to access their driveways via a right turn from Aurora.

Can you provide flaggers or special signs to direct traffic to my business?

The contractor will use flaggers when necessary to ensure proper traffic control and safety. However, flaggers will not be specifically assigned to business driveways for the sole purpose of directing traffic in and out of businesses.

Blue “Business Access” signs will also be used when construction is conducted outside businesses. Individual businesses are also permitted to create their own specialized signage per a temporary signage permit available during construction. Interested businesses should contact the City’s Permit Services Manager, Jeff Forry, at (206) 801-2521 or jforry@shorelinewa.gov prior to developing specialized signage. For more information on local sign makers, call the construction hotline at (206) 801-2485.

Will pedestrians be able to walk to my business/residence?

Yes, although there will be temporary detours throughout construction. Pedestrian pathways and bus stops will be kept clear of obstructions to the maximum extent possible.

Will I be notified about utility outages?

Yes. Utility companies are responsible for providing notices to affected properties at least 48 hours prior to any planned service shut-offs or interruptions.

I think this will affect my business. What kind of resources can the City provide? Can I be compensated for lost business?

The City of Shoreline is committed to supporting businesses during construction for the Aurora Corridor Project. Since construction began, the City has:

- Partnered with Shoreline Community College’s Business Assistance program for business development training.
- Established the City’s economic development program.
- Provided resources specific to the Aurora Business District.
- Provided a consulting team to monitor a 24-hour hotline and provide regular communication during construction.

While the City cannot provide compensation for lost business, you can contact the City’s Economic Development Program Manager for more information on other City programs that are helping to improve the vibrancy and economic health of Shoreline’s commercial districts. You can call (206) 801-2218 or email deernissee@shorelinewa.gov for more information about these programs and resources for businesses.

For links to more information about business resources and the Small Business Accelerator Program, visit www.shorelinewa.gov/aurora and click on the “Resources for businesses” link.

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I think construction work damaged my property. What do I do?

If you feel that you experienced property damage caused by construction, call the project hotline at (206) 801-2485 for information about where to file a claim.

Is the City replacing some sidewalks that were installed only a few years ago?

The only “sidewalk” recently installed that the City is replacing is a temporary asphalt pathway. The City is installing consistent, 7-foot sidewalks and 4-foot amenity zones along the entire corridor as part of the Aurora Corridor Project.

Aurora Corridor Project design and funding

How were the business and residential communities involved in the process?

The Aurora Corridor Pre-Design Study was a year-long public process in 1998 to develop a design recommendation to the City Council. The process included 13 meetings by the Citizen Advisory Task Force (which consisted of 13 business and residential community members); six Technical Advisory Committee meetings with partner agencies such as the City of Seattle, Washington State Department of Transportation and King County Metro; three community open houses; and eight City Council meetings. At the end of the study, the Citizen Advisory Task Force, the Technical Advisory Committee and the City Council each voted unanimously in favor of the current design concept for Aurora. There have also been many public meetings for environmental and design processes and construction coordination after the pre-design study was completed.

Why are sidewalks necessary when nobody walks on Aurora?

People do walk on Aurora. Each day, hundreds of people walk to and from multiple bus stops on Aurora, particularly near the Aurora Village Transit Center on N 200th Street. Some of these riders are residents of Shoreline’s 123 group homes and assisted living facilities and will benefit substantially by having a safe route to bus stops and nearby businesses.

How wide is the roadway required to be by the Aurora Corridor Project design concept?

The current width of Aurora right-of-way ranges from 90 to 120 feet. In general, the design plans call for a 110-foot right-of-way that includes:

- two travel lanes in each direction;
- a business access and transit (BAT) lane in each direction;
- a median with protected pockets for left- and U-turns; and
- a 7-foot sidewalk separated from the street by a four-foot amenity zone for things such as fire hydrants, lighting and landscaping.

Why are medians part of the design?

State regulations require access management on roadways like Aurora Avenue. The City chose focused left-turn and U-turn lanes connected by medians instead of jersey barriers or interchanges. These turn lanes provide 16 feet of space in some areas along the middle of Aurora, which allow enough width for most vehicles to make U-turns. The medians connecting the turn lanes are also 16-feet wide. This design also allows for a more consistent traffic channelization and more room for pedestrian refuge areas.

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Will taxes be raised to pay for construction and maintenance of Aurora?

No. Construction is being paid through state and federal grants and other funding with matching money from the City of Shoreline. These matching City funds are programmed in Shoreline's six-year Capital Improvement Program. These state and federal funds represent Shoreline tax dollars returning to benefit the entire community. Decisions about landscaping and urban design elements take into account what Shoreline expects to be able to afford as part of its operating budget and will be factored into Shoreline's yearly maintenance budget. The project does not include the cost of undergrounding overhead utility lines. Seattle City Light will charge rate payers over a 20-year period to recover these costs.

Are improvements to Aurora expected to move traffic onto residential streets?

No. The overall goal of the Aurora Corridor Project is to make Aurora work better for traffic, transit, pedestrians and businesses. Many people already say they avoid Aurora because of existing conditions. The current four-lane design will be expanded to six lanes, providing one lane in each direction specifically for bus transit and business access (via the BAT lanes). This will get buses out of the traffic lanes used for private vehicles and improve traffic flow.

Further, one of the specific project goals is to provide improvements that will not generate spill-over traffic. The City of Shoreline is committed to preserving and protecting neighborhoods, and has already developed the [Neighborhood Traffic Safety Program](#) to help residential streets address traffic concerns. The City will continue to work with neighborhoods to address traffic concerns.

If you notice a significant increase in traffic on your residential street during construction, please call the construction hotline at (206) 801-2485 and the City will investigate.

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